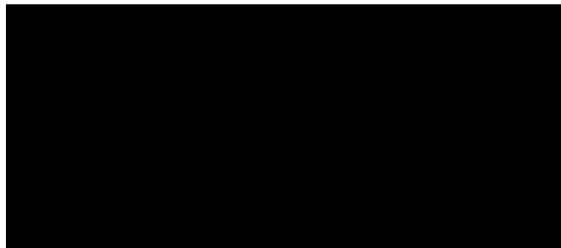


27 August 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Research on Africa

1. A meeting was held on 14 August 1957 in the Office of the Chief, Geographic Research Area, to discuss the problem of geographic research on Africa. Participants were:



25X1A9a

2. It was agreed that, in general, CIA does not have the kind or quantity of information on Africa that is needed. The following gaps are of particular importance in geographic research:

a. Basic data in the general fields of physical geography, ethnography, and economics.

b. Knowledge of native tribal and urban areas in Africa: the relation of native peoples to terrain, of superimposed legal boundaries to old native boundaries, of detribalized - urbanized - mixed native groups in the cities and towns to their rural homeland. Influence of the relationship on customs, institutions, tensions and mobility. Considerable ethnographic work seems to be programmed by the Russians (see recent study on Bantu peoples).
[NOTE: Much basic information on Bantu is available in English and French studies. Perhaps we should be a bit more specific in using the group word 'Bantu', which includes several hundred identifiable types. Among the Bantu peoples, it is the specific tribal loyalties which may be important and about which we need more information.]

c. Commodity flow -- detailed data on kind and volume, ports, costs, physical basis, trends and implications.

d. Information on Soviet techniques of politico-economic penetration.

SUBJECT: Research on Africa

3. Purpose of the geographic data collection, evaluation, and analysis that is needed:

a. To develop intelligence that will aid the U.S. in countering Soviet penetration. One Soviet objective is to exploit the continent's resources, trade, and manpower; to subvert the uneducated masses as well as their Western-educated leaders. Another Soviet objective appears to be the interference with U.S., British, French, and Belgian efforts to explore and utilize the resources of the various countries in Africa and to prevent our use of these strategic materials; to keep our money, time and effort involved in non-productive activities. A guideline to effective action is provided by the list of what we now need to meet requirements on China, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. To this must be added those data which are necessary to fulfill requirements for intelligence support of U.S. penetration and the prohibition of Soviet success. Commodity study provides a direct route to determination of Soviet intentions; from our point of view and for our particular use, is so far being inadequately done by current reporters and OIR research even though responsibilities are assigned and work is being done; because of the massiveness of the African scene, would have to focus on the most fruitful sectors.

b. To support requirements for U/W, E&E and similar studies; involves some reconsideration of strategic concepts -- North Africa as a redoubt area, context and techniques of U/W.

4. Part of the data problem is caused by the fact that policy and operations vis-a-vis Africa have not yet themselves matured. Requirements are not crystallized sufficiently to stimulate adequate funding of research or even effective use of data that are available. An additional problem is the size of Africa. We undertake regional research on a continent with tools which normally are applied to a country. The interrelationship of continental, regional, and country problems has not yet been stated clearly enough for basic work.

5. The group concluded that a reorganization of the internal geographic effort is the suitable approach to the Africa problem. External research would provide some gain, but its capabilities are inadequate and its techniques improper for the sophisticated result desired. The NIS is appropriate as a vehicle in its country approach in political, economic, and military problems, but that which is lacking and not covered by NIS is the treatment of problems which are related to geographic regions encompassing more than one national territory.

SUBJECT: Research on Africa

6. D/CG will determine what internal reorganization will best accomplish the desired increase of emphasis on Africa. No over-all personnel increases can be anticipated.

7. Chief/G will review the problem further as it relates to programs in other divisions.

25X1A9a

Chief, Geographic Research

Distribution:

0&1 - Ch/C

1 - AD/RR

1 - Ch/D/CG

1 - Ch/D/CG

1 - Ch/D/GL

1 [REDACTED], D/CG 25X1A9a

1 [REDACTED], D/CG

ORR:Ch/G:JAB:jmc/535(26 August 1957)